

## Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 MASERU 01344 291749Z

45

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

IO-10 OMB-01 PC-01 EUR-12 /082 W

----- 052374

R 291315Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY MASERU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5422

INFO AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE MASERU 1344

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, LT

SUBJECT: DEATH OF CHIEF JUSTICE MAPETLA

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED: LESOTHO GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED DECEMBER 28 THAT CHIEF JUSTICE JOAS T. MAPETLA HAD DIED EARLY THAT MORNING AFTER LONG ILLNESS. MAPETLA WAS FIRST LESOTHO TO HOLD POSITION OF CHIEF JUSTICE, HAVING ASSUMED POSITION IN JANUARY 1974. END UNCLASSIFIED.

2. BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE: COMMENT: MAPETLA'S DEATH IS SEVERE BLOW TO LESOTHO. HE WAS GENERALLY CONSIDERED TO BE ONE OF TWO OR THREE ABLEST MEN IN COUNTRY. HE DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF FOR COURAGE, FAIRNESS, AND PROFESSIONAL ABILITY IN HIS CONDUCT OF THE TRIAL OF THE FIRST GROUP OF MEN ACCUSED OF TREASON IN WAKE OF 1974 COUP ATTEMPT. GOL WILL BE HARD-PRESSED TO FIND A REPLACEMENT FOR HIM. MOST NEARLY QUALIFIED REPLACEMENT WOULD BE KHALAKI SELLO, PRIVATE LAWYER AND RECENT IV GRANTEE, BUT HE LACKS STATURE OF MAPETLA AND IS ALSO LEADER OF OPPOSITION BASUTOLAND CONGRESS PARTY AND SHARP CRITIC OF GOVERNMENT. GOL WOULD BE LOATH TO REVERT TO FORMER PRACTICE OF HAVING SOUTH AFRICAN FILL POSITION; IT MAY TURN TO UNDP TO RECRUIT QUALIFIED AFRICAN EXPATRIATE. MEANWHILE, ACTING CHIEF JUSTICE IS TEWFIK COTRAN, PALESTINIAN-BORN CHRISTIAN WITH BRITISH CITIZENSHIP.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 MASERU 01344 291749Z

HAUGHT

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION, JUDGES  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 29 DEC 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** KelleyW0  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1975MASERU01344  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D750449-0010  
**From:** MASERU  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1975/newtext/t1975128/aaaaagsm.tel  
**Line Count:** 61  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION AF  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 2  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** KelleyW0  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 21 AUG 2003  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <21 AUG 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <09 DEC 2003 by KelleyW0>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
06 JUL 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** DEATH OF CHIEF JUSTICE MAPETLA  
**TAGS:** PINT, CDES, LT, (MAPETLA, JOAS T), (SELLO, KHALAKI)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006